



Sullivan Middle School

District: Sullivan School District
Building Enrollment: 448
Grade Range: 6-8



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A Snapshot of Sullivan Middle School...

Sullivan Middle School is located in Sullivan, Missouri, about 60 miles west of St. Louis County. The community of Sullivan is approximately 6,300 in population and primarily serves as a bedroom community for families who travel to St. Louis to work. While Sullivan offers employment in manufacturing, food service, banking, and retail, many residents commute to work in St. Louis on a daily basis. The Sullivan Public School District serves 2,128 students from preschool through twelfth grade in four separate buildings – primary, elementary, middle, and high school – on three campuses.

Sullivan Middle School, as it exists today, is the result of a transformation that has occurred during the last decade. In its early years, the middle school campus served as a fifth grade center, then as a fifth/sixth grade learning center, then as a fifth through eighth grade complex. Finally, in 2000, the school embraced a true middle school philosophy and established its identity as a school serving sixth through eighth grade students. Community support and funding have allowed complete renovation, new programs, and new personnel. Sullivan Middle School is an environment that caters to the developmental needs of middle school-aged children, and all students, regardless of their challenges, thrive.

Sullivan Middle School's Mission (as shared with the Sullivan Public School District): "...to provide quality educational opportunities that enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to become responsible and productive adults."

"Time to Shine"

Sullivan Middle School's theme for the 2005-2006 school year, "Time to Shine – In the Middle," reflects the school's unique approach to helping adolescent students grow academically, socially, physically, and emotionally. Now in its eighth year as an Accelerated School, Sullivan Middle School has invested time in taking stock to determine its strengths and weaknesses and has taken steps to enhance the learning format to best meet the needs of students' diverse needs. A modified eight block scheduling format now allows students to attend core subject courses every other day and elective/exploratory courses every day. At the sixth grade level, teams of three teachers introduce the process of changing core classes within their team. Seventh and eighth grade classrooms are subject-specific with students changing classes on the modified-block schedule.

Students meet daily with their team during an advisory program to help with building-wide goals of service learning, character education, reading, math, study skills, and team building. Scheduling and course formats are designed to help students transition smoothly to the high school.

“The middle years are often times of great change for students who are moving from childhood to adolescence. Not only is the staff available to help students academically, but they also try to reinforce them socially and emotionally to help students with this change process.”

A myriad of programs and services help those students that struggle with academic, social or emotional challenges. Sullivan Middle School houses an alternative school, AIM – Alternative Instructional Model – “Program for Success,” to help students with credit recovery after they have experienced a grade level retention. A multidisciplinary special services care team meets weekly to discuss specific students’ needs. A mentoring program pairs students with adult community members for weekly activities. The student assistance team meets weekly to assist with intervention plans for at-risk students. Students from the high school’s A+ Program offer after-school tutoring. Open library evenings are hosted weekly for students and community members, and Saturday school is available two times a month.

At Sullivan Middle School, an ever-changing variety of activities affords every student an opportunity to create his or her “time to Shine”. As a 21st Century Community Learning Center, Sullivan Middle School has received funding to create before and after-school learning programs for all students. Over 250 students participate in activities such as Equestrian Club, Life Skills, Bowling, Yoga, and Guitar Club. Offerings change periodically based on student needs and interests. The 21st Century Program has also partnered with Fidelity Communications to train a group of students to learn about video broadcasting and to produce specials for the local television station. Students publish the weekly EAGLE Press, highlighting important aspects of “life in the middle.” A variety of MSHSAA activities offers students the opportunity to explore their athletic interests, and several special student athletes participate in the state Special Olympics program.

A Professional Learning Community Facilitating a “Quest for the Best”

The Accelerated Schools philosophy has guided Sullivan Middle School administration, faculty, and staff toward a vision of becoming a professional learning community to ensure the success of all students. Teachers actively pursue their own continued learning in the interest of helping students achieve. All subject area teachers participate in professional development on teaching reading, as well as teaching and assessing student writing. Staff members have made it their goal to “become their own experts” in the area of adolescent education and how age-specific minds develop and work. They have spent several years studying such topics as brain-based learning, the middle school philosophy, KAGAN practice of cooperative learning and Bloom’s taxonomy of higher level thinking. Grade level meetings and MAP training, augmented by ongoing focus groups, book studies and training, are a cornerstone of professional development for Sullivan Middle School teachers.

“SMS spends an enormous amount of time helping teachers reflect on their craft as a teacher and instructional leader. Building goals for professional development are centered on the student learner and student outcomes as a result of teacher instruction.”

Shared leadership responsibilities at Sullivan Middle School promote a professional learning environment, and all faculty members are made to feel and encouraged to act like leaders. Peer coaching and observation foster a sense of comfort and trust among colleagues. Teachers think actively about their work and

hold high expectations for their work as professionals within the school community. Administrative practices encourage teachers to embrace their overall purpose – to help students achieve.

Gold Star Practices – What’s Working at Sullivan Middle School

- ★ *Every Sullivan Middle School student is required to take reading as an exploratory class.*
- ★ *The Renaissance Incentive Program rewards students for any accomplishment school staff can think of. A shopping cart donated by the local Wal-Mart Supercenter is stocked with “Fabulous Prizes” to offer to students.*
- ★ *All teachers have implemented a “Focus Word” vocabulary-building program which will arm every Sullivan Middle School student with 310 “Focus Words” designed to make them successful readers and writers.*

Sullivan Middle School cares about students, families, and the community it serves. Inside its walls, adolescent students grow together in an environment that is custom-made to meet their needs.